DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 363 884 CS 214 105

AUTHOR Simic, Marjorie
TITLE Publishing Children's Writing. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, Bloomington, IN.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO EDO-CS-93-08
PUB DATE 93
CONTRACT RR93002011
NOTE 3p.
AVAILABLE FROM ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, Indiana University, 2805 E. 10th St., Suite 150, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audience Awareness; Classroom Environment; Elementary Education; Teacher Role; *Writing for Publication; *Writing Instruction; *Writing Processes
IDENTIFIERS *Childrens Writing; ERIC Digests; Writing Development

ABSTRACT

To make writing public, the writer must have an audience. A cooperative and caring environment that invites children to share and respond is the type of supportive environment in which children's reading and writing can flourish. Children who have not published do not write for an audience, but instead write for a critical reader--the teacher. According to several experts, how teachers choose to make student writing public may not be as significant as the attitude instilled in students during the writing. An integral part of the publication stage is sharing, in which children receive feedback on their writing while in the "author's chair" or the "author's circle." In the process of revision, children become responsible for corrections. Ultimately, the goal is for students to be able to express themselves and what they are learning through writing. (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 363 884

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

ERIC Digest

Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication EDO-CS-93-08

Indiana University
2805 E. 10th St., Suite 150

D85

Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
(812) 855-5847; (800) 759-4723

Publishing Children's Writing

by Marjorie Simic

To make writing public, the writer must have an audience. The audience becomes the writer's stimulus—the purpose for writing. If children do not have a purpose for writing (i.e., an intended audience) then writing becomes an "exercise" for a non-communicative event. Children who have not published do not write for an audience, but instead write for a critical reader—the teacher.

Publishing for early writers may mean reading their writing to teachers, a group of children, a friend, or a parent. Publication may mean showing or displaying the work. Writing can be displayed on bulletin boards, on classroom walls or in the halls, mailed to pen pals, sent home, or published in "real" book form. Publishing "real" books is a child-centered production, where the child designs the book cover and illustrates the book, has a dedication and title page, and may even have a page written "about the author." Students model bookmaking just like real authors.

Writing Competitions

Some schools or school districts have writing competitions. The author of the best handmade book in each classroom gets to attend a conference for young authors. Some schools arrange for all children in the school to attend the conference. A children's book author may be contacted to talk to the young authors, and workshops on writing may be conducted in which children share ideas about being authors with each other. The children's books are displayed, then put in their school libraries for others to read. Copies are sometimes made and placed in public libraries to reach others in the community.

Some people question the need for and value of writing competitions. One may think the rewards for becoming an author are publication and the self-satisfaction that comes from sharing one's idea. But acknowledgement of good writing, whether it is peer or adult, helps build an awareness of the importance of writing.

Marjorie Simic is an Educational Specialist with the Indiana State Department of Education.

Calkins (1986) and Hansen (1987) support rewards but also see the need to celebrate throughout the school year. They encourage teachers not to wait until the end of the school year to celebrate authorship. The celebration should take place early in the year and continue throughout the school year. Make scissors, markers, crayons, paper, and other bookmaking materials and techniques available in September to encourage and excite students about publishing. Schedule author conferences periodically and invite the public in to browse. Events can be centered around completion of a topic, celebration of holidays, "awareness" weeks, or featured students, careers, etc. These celebrations of authorship to the process writing curriculum generate excitement about writing, and they promote more writing in classrooms.

Classroom Environment

How teachers choose to make student writing public may not be as significant as the attitude instilled in students during writing (Balcer, 1990). "That means treating students to that final and ultimate writerly pleasure of finding their words come alive in the faces of their listeners and their readers" (Willinsky, 1985). The classroom atmosphere determines the amount and kind of risks taken in writing. Children need to feel support and acceptance from teachers and peers to take the kind of risks involved in the process of producing good writing. When children feel safe from criticism, they become eager to write and to share their writing. The class becomes a community of writers.

During publication, children can play both the roles of author and audience to other children's pieces. Instead of questioning the teacher, they can question each other for clarity of meaning. Children as authors use the ideas of their audience when revising their writing. As audience, they have the opportunity to see their ideas used by other students in their revised stories. Shifting from author to audience and back encourages children to become perceptive readers and writers.

It is also important that children confer with each other as they write. Some time should be set aside daily for children to read orally what they have written or are in

the process of writing. Older children who are experiencing difficulty with writing may find it less threatening to share their writing with younger students. The benefits of such sharing are twofold: the older student gains the confidence and esteem needed in order to continue his/her writing, and the younger student sees, early on in his/her learning, the connection between reading and writing.

The "Author's Chair"

An integral part of the publication stage is sharing. Graves and Hansen (1983) refer to this sharing as the "author's chair." As writers, children struggle to put their thoughts on paper, and they talk about these thoughts with other writers. As readers, they compose messages and ask questions about published books. They play, they invent, they mimic, when they compose in reading and writing and sitting on the author's chair." Use of an author's chair gives children feedback on their writing, models conferencing, and develops a sense of "community" for writing and authoring (Graves and Hansen, 1983).

Hansen (1987) says young authors need to respond to other authors if they are to make the important connection between reading and writing. "Authors who share their own writing and who ask other authors questions experience connections between reading and writing," states Hansen. She describes 4 different response situations: (1) response to unfinished pieces; (2) response to an author's published piece; (3) response to other student's published books; and (4) response to books by professional authors. These situations all need to occur in the classroom for children to develop a sense of authorship.

Harste (1988) sees his "author's circle" as "crucial in helping authors develop the sense of audience so essential to becoming a writer who can successfully communicate with others." This sharing and responding helps students develop a reader perspective on their writing among readers they know and trust. The child receives opinions and ideas from many children, whereas during individual conferences, the author receives the comments of only one person. Children learn how to be helpful responders in an author's circle. They learn how to discover good qualities in a piece, and how to ask good questions about the content. Additionally, circle participants learn that their ideas are valued when many of them later turn up in the work of the authors they have helped.

In the process of revision, children become responsible for corrections. A piece ready for publication must contain correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and good handwriting. It is important that the writing not be taken away from the writer during the publication stage. Final decisions about content, title, and so on, must be made by the author who must also attend to conventions. When involved in group publication, the author should remain in control of publishing decisions about illustrations, layout, form of publication, etc.

Hansen (1987) feels that students who attend to their own misspellings, errors in punctuation, grammar, and so on during the editing stage of publication learn and remember more of the mechanics of writing than if the errors are found for them. Calkins (1986) believes that even adult writers who are writing for publication must release their work at some point to have it corrected by editors. She argues that, as writers, we no longer want to "own" those errors. If teachers choose to do the final edit, they are taking the "ownership" of the writing from the writer, and they should be aware of the effects this may have on future writing for students in the classroom.

Teachers need to know their purposes for having children write. Ultimately, the goal is for students to be able to express themselves and what they are learning through writing that clearly conveys meaning to the reader. Realistically, teachers must give students support and encouragement to "make their best better," and in so doing, children must be allowed to be responsible for all the components of publication.

Making writing public brings an additional dimension to reading and writing. Writers view themselves as authors and value the interaction with their audience in the process of writing. A cooperative and caring environment that invites children to share and to respond is the type of supportive environment in which children's reading and writing can flourish.

References

Balcer, B. (1990). "Give Your Students a Reason to Write. HelpThem Get Published." *Learning*, 19(4), 52-55. [EJ 425 086]

Calkins, L. (1986). *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. [ED 263 613]

Graves, D. and Hansen, J. (1983). "The Author's Chair." *Language Arts*, 60 (2), 176-83. [EJ 276 117]

Hansen, J. (1987). *When Writers Read*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. [ED 282 226]

Harste, J. et al. (1988). *Creating Classrooms for Authors: The ReadingWriting Connection*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. [ED 320 168]

Willinsky, J. (1985). "To Publish and Publish and Publish." *Language Arts*, 62(6), 619-23. [EJ 323 411]

This publication was prepared with partial funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RR93002011. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.